

Kelly Air Force Base
Environmental Restoration Advisory Board (RAB)
July 17, 2001 Meeting Minutes
Kennedy High School

Members/Alternates Present

Community Members

Dr. Gene Lené,
RAB Community Co-Chair
Mr. Robert Silvas (newly elected)
Mr. George Rice
Mr. Carl Mixon
Ms. Peggy Grybos
Mr. Phillip Farrell (Mr. Roberson's alt.),
GKDA
Mr. Armando Quintanilla
Mr. Mark Puffer
Mr. Sam Murrah
Ms. Dominga Adames
Mr. Tony Martinez
Mr. Názirite Pérez
Ms. Tanya Huerta
Ms. Annalise Peace
Mr. Roy Botello
Mr. Chuck Person

Government Members

Mr. Adam Antwine, AFBCA
RAB Installation Co-Chair
Mr. Sam Sanchez, SAMHD
Mr. Nicolas Rodriguez, Jr., BMWD
Ms. Laura Stankosky, NCM, USEPA
Mr. Mark Weegar, TNRCC
Ms. Abbi Power, TNRCC

Facilitators

Mr. David Smith

Meeting Goals

1. Provide education on selected health issues.
2. Receive updates on remediation projects.
3. Discuss changes due to the base's official closing.

I. Call to Order

- A. Mr. David Smith called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m.
- B. Mr. Smith introduced himself as the RAB's new facilitator. He reminded attendees that simultaneous Spanish translation headsets were available. He then reminded RAB members of the board's ground rules (e.g., the general public should wait until the community comment time to speak). He pointed out that Booz Allen & Hamilton was here to help anyone needing assistance.

- C. Mr. Smith introduced the RAB members.
- D. The minutes from the last RAB meeting (April 17, 2001) were presented for approval. Ms. Tanya Huerta noted that she appreciated seeing the minutes reproduced in Spanish as well. The motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded. The minutes were approved without objection.
- E. Mr. Smith read the evening's goals and noted that we were not limited to their consideration.

II. Community Comment Time

- A. Mr. Robert Silvas introduced himself and described his employment. He said he appreciated that the mailings announcing the meeting were arriving on time. He said that he would like to know why he was not considered for membership at the previous meeting (Dr. Gene Lené said there were too few members present). Also, he asked why there is a new facilitator.
- B. Mr. Rodrigo Garcia commented on the ATSDR study. He felt that there were contradictions in the report. He asked why the ATSDR findings have been completely reversed since the August 1999 report. He said we need to hold the Air Force accountable and drag the ATSDR back in here to answer more questions.
- C. Mr. Chavel Lopez stated that he represented 170 families around Kelly Air Force Base. They are frustrated and mad that Kelly closed down without a cleanup plan in place. There is still a lot of sickness in the community, and no "official" health survey has been done on former workers or residents. They believe that ATSDR is just a "rubber stamp" for the Air Force, citing that fact that no city consultant is yet in place to look over the cleanup options. They say that the Air Force just wants natural attenuation, whereas they believe in being persistent until all the contamination is cleaned up. Politicians need to make sure that the cleanup is done and that funding is used for health studies in this area only.
- D. Ms. Esmeralda Camacho, a member of the community from Division Street, questioned whether ATSDR really addresses past or future exposure. She raised the following questions: How can ATSDR conclude that lead levels are not a problem when they did not test for lead levels? Why is soil gas smelled in the neighborhood? Why are children passing out after eating? Why did they check water pollution levels in Medina Lake, and not our current drinking water source? Can information be disseminated on the Spanish language TV station?
- E. Mr. Manuel Hernandez said his mother still lives in the area. He asked if the food that is grown in the area is potentially contaminated, and whether the RAB could give people some safety guidelines. He asked that they let residents know if there is any risk.
- F. There were officially no further public comments, but Mr. Armando Quintanilla said that he wanted to echo the comments of Mr. Lopez. He believed that EPA and TNRCC have not done enough to speed up the cleanup of the neighborhoods.
- G. Mr. George Rice asked a question regarding the City's evaluation: Has the Air Force given the city all the materials they need? Mr. Adam Antwine noted that he will cover this in his briefing tonight and the Air Force will provide the city all the information they need to conduct its evaluation.
- H. Ms. Dominga Adames asked what had happened to Zone 5. Nothing had been discussed about this Zone. Mr. Antwine said that Zone 5 is going through the same process as all the other zones and that RAB would be willing to share that information with her.
- I. Ms. Tanya Huerta said that the poster describing what is being done in each Zone needs to be completed so people can understand what is being done.

- J. Mr. Carl Mixon asked if we had a quick answer regarding the safety of food grown in gardens. Mr. Sam Sanchez said that ATSDR did an assessment of whether vegetables could take up chemicals and they did not conclude that there was any risk, but that fruit was not tested. They did not think volatile organic compounds were a problem.
- K. Mr. Názarite Perez said that two Canadian specialists reported that some plants could absorb chemicals which could then be passed on to animals that eat the plants. Therefore, people could be contaminated by eating fruit.
- L. Mr. Perez next asked about the status of the Air Force checking on wells North of Highway 90.
- M. Mr. Rodrigo Garcia interjected a question: Why didn't the Air Force initiate environmental restoration activities back in 1982?
- N. Mr. Chavel Lopez said that he knew for a fact that cranberries were contaminated at the Massachusetts Military Reservation. He added that EPA is not doing enough to protect our sole source of drinking water.
- O. Mr. Antwine said that there is a plan in place (within our community-based solution process) regarding the potential for testing of deep-rooted plants that could take up contamination in their roots. For example, he said that the Air Force could test pecans.

III. Public Center for Environmental Health (PCEH) and Kelly Health Information Office (KHIO)

- A. Mr. Chuck Meshako introduced himself and reminded people that he had spoken about this issue at the last RAB meeting. AFBCA is creating the KHIO as a central point of contact for people to turn to regarding health issues. Most AFBCA staff are geologists or chemists; the new office will be staffed with public health professionals.
 - B. Mr. Meshako stated that the PCEH is a long-term effort between the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (SAMHD) and the Air Force to study health issues around Kelly. This arrangement with SAMHD still must go before City Council before we can enter into the agreement. AFBCA also has approval to hire a public affairs person and two public health professionals to staff the KHIO.
 - C. Ms. Huerta asked how this new office would be different from what the Health Department was opening. Mr. Meshako said that SAMHD has other sources of funding and may be addressing broader issues. The SAMHD and KHIO will work cooperatively. SAMHD will perform long-term studies while the KHIO provides information to the community from the Air Force. The Air Force is looking for people with Masters in Public Health to staff this office.
- Q: Mr. Martinez asked whether there was any interface with Medicare or HMOs to see if there could be coordination.
- A: Mr. Sanchez said that the answer was yes. This will provide a resource for former Kelly workers around the country to address their health care questions.
- Q: Ms. Adames asked what happens when someone has already been diagnosed with a condition.
- A: Mr. Sanchez said that if their own doctor diagnoses them, the environmental screening clinics would not be of service to them. People who do not have insurance will be introduced to CareLink as a source of medical care.
- Q: Ms. Tanya Huerta asked whether the SAMHD clinic would still screen people with a current diagnosis.

- A: Mr. Sanchez said yes, the SAMHD clinic wants to collect that data.
- Q: Mr. Quintanilla asked whether the clinic performs x-rays.
- A: Mr. Sanchez said no, there are risks associated with x-rays, and that they are not necessary for the screening. Interviews are conducted and blood work is done. If more follow-up screening is necessary, he will seek additional funding from the AF.
- Q: Mr. Quintanilla asked how much funding has been received and how many people had been screened.
- A: Mr. Sanchez said that \$214,000 has been received from ATSDR and they are seeking additional funding of \$177,000. With this funding, they could potentially screen 3,500 people next year. He has not yet received any funding from the AF.
- Q: Mr. Martinez asked if they are looking at demographics in the neighborhoods.
- A: Mr. Sanchez said yes, they are looking at worker exposure since this was not done by the ATSDR. The greatest possibility of exposure will occur once cleanup starts.
- Q: Mr. Quintanilla asked if screening is done for everyone who comes into the clinic.
- A: Mr. Sanchez said that originally they were limited to the same three zip codes studied by the ATSDR.
- Q: Mr. Adames asked why they don't take x-rays. These don't lie.
- A: Mr. Sanchez said that physicians and nurses don't automatically do x-rays since these are not used for screening; they are for diagnosis.
- Q: Ms. Peace asked about why zip codes and not census tracts are used.
- A: Mr. Sanchez said they use the same zip codes used by ATSDR. The city's health census is available on the web and it provides specific information on the 10 leading causes of death by census tract.
- Q: Mr. Botello asked if there was a time limitation on testing.
- A: Mr. Sanchez replied that the agreement with the AF will go for 10 years and they will try to leverage other funding to get other researchers involved.

A ten-minute break was taken.

IV. Update on Projects

- A. Building 326 was one of four old radium paint shops. Radium is a radioactive element that was commonly used to illuminate aircraft instruments. Between 1921 and 1952, four different paint shops existed; two were demolished. In 1999, a scoping survey was conducted for decommissioning. In 2000, a characterization survey was performed with a more detailed study during 2001. In Building 326 levels were found above background, but these were not a threat to human health; they will be remediated to background levels. Outside the building, a sewer manhole had elevated radiation levels (approximately 20 times background). AFBICA notified SAWS, GKDA, TDH, TNRCC, and EPA.
- Q: Mr. Quintanilla asked how elevated the radiation level was.
- A: Mr. Meshako said that one would need to spend thousands of hours in the manhole to get higher exposure.
- Q: Ms. Huerta asked who pays for the specialists who come in to screen the manholes.
- A: Mr. Meshako said that AFBICA would pay for AFIERA to do these surveys. SAWS will not do this work. A work plan should be ready in a few weeks for this survey.

Remediation work inside the building is already underway, but AFBCA does not yet know how long it will take to remediate the radiation, which was only discovered in April or June of this year. Radium use ended in 1952.

Q: Mr. Quintanilla asked if anyone was working in the contaminated crawlspace of the building when it was renovated 10 years ago.

A: Mr. Meshako said that they had to cut a hole in the cement floor to access that area.

B. Ms. Vanessa Musgrave asked for comment from the RAB members on a draft fact sheet and two ATSDR fact sheets (on radium and radon). Ms. Musgrave is working to improve risk communication. She asked RAB members to think about 1) what type of information would be useful to the community; 2) if a Q&A format is better; and 3) what the best way is to disseminate this information.

1. Mr. Mixon asked whether RAB members are being asked to comment on content or on format. Ms. Huerta urged that there be some alternative sources of information that could also answer questions to the community. Mr. Sanchez said that the best communication is still face-to-face.
2. Mr. Martinez asked whether the City and GKDA could help spread the word regarding the extent of the radium contamination. Mr. Antwine said that they do work directly with GKDA regarding all of the facilities that are under investigation and remediation.
3. Ms. Musgrave requested that RAB members take one week to provide her with comments by telephone (her new number is 925-3100 x665). Mr. Quintanilla suggested adding the ATSDR toll-free telephone number. Ms. Huerta asked that both daughter products of radium be included in the chemical glossary.

C. Mr. Meshako next discussed the Building 301 metal plating shop update. Electroplating was conducted from 1975 to 1999. Vats were drained and rinsed in January 2000. All equipment was removed in April 2001. This site was a significant source of solvent contamination of Zone 3 groundwater (mostly on site, however). Mr. Meshako provided some before and after photographs of the facility. Demolition will begin in August and end in September. Soil under the facility will be removed and back filled. Groundwater and soil contamination will be addressed by the Zone 2/3 Corrective Action and will use BRAC funding.

V. Update on Base Closure

A. Mr. Antwine wanted to tell the RAB what was changing as a result of the base closure. There is an incorrect assumption that the Air Force is gone because of closure. In fact, we are here and here for the long haul as the AFBCA. We will continue our efforts to put systems in place and meet regulatory requirements. Mr. Antwine also wants RAB members to understand what new tenants occupy Kelly.

1. The timeline for closing Kelly was long because this was such a large and complex base. The new map illustrates the area that is now transitioned to Lackland AFB. There are 52 sites on Kelly designated for cleanup; of these, 17 are now the responsibility of Lackland for cleanup. Lackland has a Community Council on Restoration, which is their equivalent of this RAB. Of the 10,000 people that worked at Kelly, only 800 were involuntarily separated. Most were able to find alternative work. Next, Mr. Antwine provided a list of federal tenants and some of the GKDA leased tenants (5 million square feet of space is occupied, approximately half the available space).
2. Ms. Huerta asked whether the Parent/Child Incorporated tenant housed children on site. According to Mr. Phillip Farrell, this was an administrative office and not a child care center. Mr. Antwine confirmed that there are policies for addressing high priority sites to

ensure that residential and childcare centers meet a higher standard for safety (e.g., lead-based paint).

3. All tenants must comply with the same regulatory rules that the AF must meet and must be responsible for their own operations. The AF is responsible for any past contamination. The City is responsible for police, fire, and EMS response. The City Fire Department is moving into the old Kelly fire station.
- B. Mr. Antwine provided an update on the City Council's independent assessment of the Zone 4 shallow groundwater cleanup options. The City's contractor is expected to be selected in August, with a report back to the City Council in September. Mr. Antwine summarized the plan for the establishment of the PCEH and the KHIO. Mr. Antwine also explained that Air Force would contract with an academic institution to look back 20 years to assess causes of death among Kelly workers.
1. Ms. Huerta and Mr. Quintanilla were concerned that the study will look back only 20 years, whereas it should be 30 years.
 2. Mr. Quintanilla also asked if former Kelly workers should go to the KHIO to ask questions about compensation issues. Mr. Antwine said yes, this office would be staffed to answer those questions or direct them to the source. Furthermore, Mr. William Ryan confirmed that the detailed modeling information would be provided to the City (or its selected contractor).
 3. Mr. Antwine concluded by providing the updated mailing address for AFBCA and its new location within Building 43. Mr. Quintanilla objected to the mailing address for AFBCA being at a location miles away from the physical location of AFBCA. He felt that this was a misuse of taxpayer funds.

VI. New Member Consideration

- A. Dr. Lené explained that Mr. Silvas is the new RAB candidate. Mr. Silvas explained that he wants to be a RAB member because he is committed to environmental cleanup. He wants to reverse contamination and avert problems in the future. He placed his request to join the RAB six months ago. As a KellyUSA worker, he can bring the concerns of workers to the RAB. He believes we all have a concern for our children and must work as a team to get this done. Mr. Quintanilla asked his zip code. Mr. Silvas said he lives in zip code 78215. Mr. Quintanilla moved that he be accepted. Ms. Huerta seconded the motion. Mr. Perez said that we should accept Mr. Silvas. There was not a request for a secret ballot, and he was approved unanimously.

VII. Discussion of ATSDR Report

- A. Mr. Quintanilla thought that we had discussed the ATSDR Report sufficiently. Ms. Huerta said that she wrote a letter to Dr. Abraham of the ATSDR suggesting that there are other data sources available (e.g., the disability information from the Census Bureau long form) that should be considered. Mr. Quintanilla urged that an independent assessment of the second phase of the ATSDR findings be conducted. ATSDR has promised \$1,500 to do a small local assessment separate from the TAP grants.
1. Mr. Farrell strongly recommended that the ATSDR use a professional facilitator to keep it on track. However, Ms. Huerta thought that the meeting was very well run and accomplished its mission.
 2. Mr. Quintanilla congratulated Dr. Lené on how well he handled the meeting and reminded people to provide their community comments to the ATSDR.

VIII. Community Comment Time

- A. Mr. Brook has been coming to the RAB meeting since last year. Since then, he has lost a coworker and friend. Mr. Brook asked if the City would use the \$5 million to check for chemical exposure. Mr. Sanchez said that the funding would be provided to the City over five years and would very carefully assess for chemical exposure. Mr. Brook said that he would like to find out if the Parent/Child facility is located near Building 326.
- B. Ms. Esmeralda Camacho complained about the health screening. They lost vials of her blood, and the hearing test did not work. What is SAMHD doing with the money? Why did the AF look for contamination in the manholes at the paint shop? Did they send SAWS workers there just to reprimand them later? Somebody has to answer these questions.
- C. Mr. Rodrigo Garcia asked why the ATSDR uses zip codes; they should use Census Tracts. He felt that the ATSDR should ask each person about their health problems, collect data from local doctors and health insurers, and send questionnaires home through the schools. This must be funded by the AF, he believed, and it should be conducted by SAMHD, not ATSDR. Mr. Garcia provided his suggestions to Ms. Musgrave.

IX. Meeting Wrap-up

- A. Mr. Smith reminded people of the telephone number for the Public Information Line and stated that it is no longer called the Hot Line. Also, he reminded attendees about the EPA public meeting on July 26 at 2–4:30 p.m. (see flyer). Ms. Huerta amplified the purpose for the meeting, which was to collect input on the proposed public involvement policy EPA will use for its programs.
- B. Past Action Items
Mr. Smith told members about the responses to previous action items that were provided to RAB members. Ms. Huerta said RAB members appreciate getting materials in advance.
- C. New Items
 - 1. Mr. Quintanilla asked how much was expended in FY00 for radioactive and neighborhood cleanup. We need a briefing on plans for FY01 and past spending. Mr. Quintanilla also asked about the new maps. We need to have the new maps.
 - 2. Mr. Martinez said that property values should be considered. People believe that their values are skyrocketing.
 - 3. Mr. Quintanilla asked for relative risk rankings for each of the 35 sites noted by Mr. Antwine.
 - 4. Ms. Huerta added a comment that the Wesley Community Center was selected as a finalist for an environmental justice grant request with the EPA.
 - 5. Ms. Peace said that we need to allow enough time for the City's report on the agenda for the next RAB.
 - 6. Mr. Perez asked about the status of the area north of Zarzamora and Hwy. 90. Ms. Huerta thought this should be an agenda item.
 - 7. Mr. Silvas asked about the reuse of wood from demolished warehouses.
 - 8. Mr. Quintanilla asked GKDA for a briefing on how computers and other equipment could be donated or sold to schools.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.